

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4776

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT,PFOR, AF

SUBJ: THEPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN AFTER ONE YEAR

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT DAOUD DOMINATES THE PRESENT REGIME IN AFGHANISTAN. HIS GOALS AND PROGRAMS, WHILE CONSISTENT WITH AFGHAN NON-ALIGNMENT AND THE "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE USSR, GENERALLY ARE PARALLEL TO U.S. INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

2. WHEN ONE TALKS ABOUT AFGHANISTAN'S POLICIES IN THE SUMMER OF 1974 ONE TALKS OF PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD, THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE TRADITIONAL ESTABLISHMENT, HIS SUPREMACY OVER THE ARMED FORCES, OVER THE BUREAUCRACY, AND OVER THE YOUNG RADICALS WHO CAME INTO POWER WITH HIM. THERE STILL ARE SOME FRICTIONS WITHIN DAOUD'S ENTOURAGE AND WE EXPECT THAT THERE WILL BE SOME SHIFTS IN PERSONNEL IN THE MONTHS AHEAD DESIGNED TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE TOP OFFICIALS

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OF HIS GOVERNMENT FULLY SHARE AND ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE

PRESIDENT'S OUTLOOK AND GOALS. SOME CHANGES WILL ALSO BE MADE TO TRY AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.

3. DAOUD'S OUTLOOK AND GOALS ALSO ARE CLEAR. HE IS DEDICATED TO AN INDEPENDENT AFGHANISTAN AND TO THE MODERNIZATION OF HIS COUNTRY ALONG LINES COMPATIBLE WITH UNIQUELY AFGHAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS. THESE GOALS CORRESPOND TO OUR INTERESTS IN AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE AND IN RAISING THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. NATIONALISM, PRAGMATISM, NON-ALIGNMENT ARE WORDS WHICH DESCRIBE DAOUD'S OUTLOOK. AND HE WILL BE DOGGED AND PERSISTENT IN PURSUING HIS GOALS. HE WILL NOT COUNTENANCE OUTSIDE (FOREIGN) INTERFERENCE OR INTERNAL DISLOYALTY. HE IS CONVINCED THAT STRONG, IF NEED BE HARSH, LEADERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL FOR AFGHANISTAN AT THIS TIME.

4. WE EXPECT SOME FORM OF CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO EMERGE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, BUT THIS PROBABLY WILL NOT WEAKEN DAOUD'S PERSONAL AUTHORITY. THE MAJOR CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM WILL BE TO ASSURE STABLE SUCCESSION TO DAOUD, A MAN IN HIS MID SIXTIES.

5. IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THREE THEMES STAND OUT. FIRST, DAOUD WILL ACCEPT AID FROM ALMOST ANY SOURCE TO ASSIST HIS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS. THE STRESS IN THAT SENTENCE IS ON WORD "HIS". SECONDLY, WHILE MAINTAINING NON-ALIGNMENT, HE IS ACUTELY AWARE THAT HIS REGIME DEPENDS ON THE ARMED FORCES AND THAT THE SOVIET UNION SUPPLIES HIS ARMED FORCES. WE CAN THEREFORE EXPECT A CONTINUING "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND THE USSR. THIRDLY, DAOUD WILL CONTINUE TO BE MOTIVATED BY THE NEED TO COPE WITH CENTRIFUGAL FORCES WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND BY HIS ANCESTRAL LOYALTIES TO KEEP THE PUSHTANISTAN ISSUE ALIVE. BUT GIVEN AFGHANISTAN'S NEED TO DEVOTE RESOURCES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO STRENGTHENING OF ITS INFERIOR MILITARY POSITION, HE WILL STOP SHORT OF INITIATING ARMED CLASHES WITH PAKISTAN UNLESS SEVERELY PROVOKED.

6. IN SHORT, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE GOOD NEWS TO REPORT FROM AFGHANISTAN. THERE IS A PURPOSEFUL REGIME. THERE IS ENHANCED FOCUS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THERE ARE GROWING LINKS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN WHICH WILL BENEFIT

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BOTH COUNTRIES AND BASIC U.S. INTERESTS IN THE AREA. PROBLEMS REMAIN, INCLUDING A SHORTAGE OF TRAINED PEOPLE DEDICATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFGHANISTAN AS A NATIONAL ENTITY, ALL THE DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH FACT THAT AFGHANISTAN IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES, THE SUCCESSION QUESTION, SOME DISCONTENT WITH THE AUTHORITARIAN NATURE OF THE REGIME, PUSHTUNISTAN. BUT DAOUD'S GOALS AND OUR INTERESTS ARE PARALLEL IN MANY WAYS, AND IT IS NOT HARD TO BE ENCOURAGED BY THE TRENDS HERE OVER

THE PAST YEAR AND THE PROSPECTS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

ELIOT

UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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